IN THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

1.   (Currently Amended) A method for issuing and redeeming a certificate over a network in conjunction with an interactive voice response system, comprising:

receiving information related to a certificate the user is purchasing over the network;

creating the certificate based on the received information, the certificate including the name of the merchant at which the certificate can be redeemed and a certificate identifier;

transmitting the certificate to the user over the network;

receiving a merchant identification in response to a call from a caller to the interactive voice response system to redeem the certificate;

validating that the merchant identification is valid;

~~instructing~~ the interactive voice response system generating a voice message to request the caller to enter the certificate identifier if the merchant identification is valid;

the interactive voice response system generating a voice message repeating the certificate identifier to the caller in response to the receipt of a message from the caller indicative of the certificate identifier;

the interactive voice response system generating a voice message requesting the caller to verify the repeated certificate identifier;

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receiving the certificate identifier entered by the caller over the network in response to the caller verifying the repeated certificate identifier; and

validating the certificate based on the received certificate identifier;

generating at least one of a plurality of codes to the interactive voice response system regarding the validity of the certificate;

the interactive voice response system generating a selected voice message and transmitting it to the caller in response to the generated at least one code; and

one of the plurality of codes indicating that the certificate is not valid at the identified merchant.

2. (Original) A method according to claim 1, further comprising storing the certificate identifier along with at least some of the received information from the user related to the certificate in a database.

3. (Original) A method according to claim 1, wherein the transmitting includes generating a graphic file of the certificate and sending the graphic file to the user with an electronic mail message.

4. (Original) A method according to claim 1, wherein the merchant identification is an identifier associated with the merchant named in the certificate.

5. (Original) A method according to claim 1, wherein the merchant identification is a telephone number for accessing the interactive voice response system.

6. (Original) A method according to claim 5, wherein validating that the merchant identification is valid includes determining whether the telephone number is present in a database.

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7. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 1, further comprising instructing the interactive voice response system generating a voice message to request the caller to call a customer service number if the merchant identification is invalid.

8. (Original) A method according to claim 1, wherein the certificate identifier is entered via a touch tone pad.

9. (Original) A method according to claim 1, wherein validating that the received certificate identifier is valid includes determining whether the certificate identifier is present in a database.

10. (Original) A method according to claim 1, wherein the certificate further includes conditions for redeeming the certificate.

11. (Original) A method according to claim 10, further comprising determining whether the certificate can be redeemed based on the conditions for redeeming the certificate.

12. (Original) A method according to claim 11, further comprising storing the certificate identifier, the merchant identification and the conditions for redeeming the certificate in a database and referring to the database to determine whether the certificate can be redeemed.

13. (Currently Amended) A system for issuing and redeeming a certificate over a network in conjunction with an interactive voice response system, comprising:

means for receiving information related to a certificate the user is purchasing over the network;

means for creating the certificate based on the received information, the certificate including the name of the merchant at which the certificate can be redeemed and a certificate identifier;

means for transmitting the certificate to the user over the network;

means for receiving a merchant identification in response to a call from a caller to the interactive voice response system to redeem the certificate;

means for validating that the merchant identification is valid;

~~means for instructing~~ the interactive voice response system generating a voice message to request the caller to enter the certificate identifier if the merchant identification is valid;

the interactive voice response system generating a voice message repeating the certificate identifier to the caller in response to the receipt of a message from the caller indicative of the certificate identifier;

the interactive voice response system generating a voice message requesting the caller to verify the repeated certificate identifier;

means for receiving the certificate identifier entered by the caller over the network in response to the caller verifying the repeated certificate identifier; ~~and~~

means for validating the certificate based on the received certificate identifier;

means for generating at least one of a plurality of codes to the interactive voice response system regarding the validity of the certificate;

the interactive voice response system generating a selected voice message and transmitting it to the caller in response to the generated at least one code; and

one of the plurality of codes indicating that the certificate is not valid at the identified merchant.

14. (Original) A system according to claim 13, further comprising means for storing the certificate identifier along with at least some of the received information from the user related to the certificate in a database.

15. (Original) A system according to claim 13, wherein the means for transmitting includes means for generating a graphic file of the certificate and sending the graphic file to the user with an electronic mail message.

16. (Original) A system according to claim 13, wherein the merchant identification is an identifier associated with the merchant named in the certificate.

17. (Original) A system according to claim 13, wherein the merchant identification is a telephone number for accessing the interactive voice response system.

18. (Original) A system according to claim 17, wherein means for validating that the merchant identification is valid includes means for determining whether the telephone number is present in a database.

19. (Currently Amended) A system according to claim 13, further comprising ~~means for instructing~~ the interactive voice response system <u>generating a voice message</u> to request the caller to call a customer service number if the merchant identification is invalid.

20. (Original) A system according to claim 13, wherein the certificate identifier is entered via a touch tone pad.

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21. (Currently Amended) A system according to claim 13, wherein <u>means for</u> validating that the received certificate identifier is valid includes <u>means for</u> determining whether the certificate identifier is present in a database.

22. (Original) A system according to claim 13, wherein the certificate further includes conditions for redeeming the certificate.

23. (Original) A system according to claim 22, further comprising means for determining whether the certificate can be redeemed based on the conditions for redeeming the certificate.

24. (Original) A system according to claim 23, further comprising means for storing the certificate identifier, the merchant identification and the conditions for redeeming the certificate in a database and referring to the database to determine whether the certificate can be redeemed.